

## Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOTe-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 FAA-00 L-03 SY-05

MCT-01 PM-04 H-02 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8446

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: EAIR IN

SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT SECURITY

REF: STATE 212490

1. EMBASSY HAD BEEN IN PROCESS OF IDENTIFYING INDIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR AIRPORT SECURITY WHEN HIJACKING OF INDIAN AIRLINES PLANE OCCURRED SEPTEMBER 10. ECON COUNSELLOR AND EMBOFF CALLED ON THE NEWLY APPOINTED DIRECTOR GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION G.S. GIDWANI AND AVIATION MINISTRY DEPUTY SECRETARY EKAMBARAM SEPTEMBER 15 TO DISCUSS SITUATION AS THEY SAW IT IN THE WAKE OF THE HIJACKING. THESE CONVERSATIONS CONFIRMED OUR CONCLUSION THAT RESPONSIBILITY FOR AIRPORT SECURITY WAS CAUGHT IN A BUREAUCRATIC TANGLE.

2. FOR PURPOSES OF MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY, INDIA'S FOUR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS (NEW DELHI, BOMBAY, CALCUTTA AND MADRAS HAD BEEN PUT UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF AN INDEPENDENT PUBLIC ENTITY, THE INTERNATIONALAIRPORT AUTHORITY OF INDIA (IAAI). THE IAAI HANDLED BOTH INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC AIRPORT OPERATIONS AT THOSE FOUR AIRPORTS. FLIGHT AND OTHER AIRCRAFT ACTIVITIES AT

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THESE FOUR FIELDS, AS WELL AS OPERATION OF ALL OTHER INDIAN

CIVIL AVIATION AIRFIELDS, CONTINUED UNDER THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL AVIATION (DGCA). GIDWANI SAID THAT HE HAD OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR AIRPORT SECURITY INCLUDING THE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS; EKAMBARAM SAID IAAI HAD SECURITY RESPONSIBILITY IN THOSE CASES. WHICHEVER IS TRUE, FACT IS THAT DGCA HAS TO DELEGATE IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL SECURITY MEASURES TO OTHERS, THROUGH IAAI WHERE IT OPERATES. IN THE CASE OF NEW DELHI AIRPORT, SECURITY IS PROVIDED BY A DETACHMENT OF THE NEW DELHI MUNICIPAL POLICE. QUESTION OF ESTABLISHING A SEPARATE SECURITY UNIT IN THE DGCA CAME UP SEVERAL YEARS AGO, GIDWANI SAID, BUT DECISION HAD BEEN MADE TO RELY ON EXISTING POLICE AND OTHER SECURITY UNITS. OPERATIONAL ASPECTS OF CIVIL AVIATION RECEIVE LITTLE REVIEW IN MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND AVIATION WHICH DEALS PROMARILY WITH BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL CIVIL AIR AGREEMENTS. MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS HAS NO ONGOING INTEREST IN AVIATION MATTERS. THUS, GOI HAS LITTLE BUREAUCRATIC CAPABILITY AT THIS POINT FOR DEALING WITH ISSUE AF INTERNATIONAL AIR SECURITY.

3. GOI HAS FOR SEVERAL YEARS HAD BOARDING PASSENGER SECURITY CHECK AT MAJOR AIRPORTS. ALL PASSENGERS FOR BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS PASS THROUGH HAND BAGGAGE INSPECTION AND BODY FRISK. AS AMPLY DEMONSTRATED BY SUCCESS OF RECENT HIJACKERS IN BRINGING ARMS ON BOARD DOMESTIC FLIGHT, THIS EXERCISE WAS NORMALLY QUITE LAX. ON INTERNATIONAL SIDE OF NEW DELHI AIRPORT NO PROVISION HAD BEEN MADE FOR SEGREGATING TRANSIT PASSENGERS FROM BOARDING PASSENGERS ONCE LATTER HAD BEEN THROUGH CHECK-IN PROCEDURE. PROBLEM THUS IN INDIA WAS NOT LACK OF DECISION TO HAVE SECURITY CONTROLS BUT RATHER BUREAUCRATIC LAXITY IN IMPLEMENTING THEM.

4. ON SEPTEMBER 14 DGCA ISSUED ORDERS PURPORTING TO TIGHTEN SECURITY WITH REGARDS TO EMBARKING PASSENGERS. ORDERS IN FACT REAFFIRMED STANDARD REQUIREMENTS FOR LIMITED HAND BAGGAGE AND RESTRICTIONS ON VISITOR'S ACCESS TO EMBARKATION ROOMS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT SIMILAR TIGHTENING UP ON CHECK-IN PROCEDURES BY SECURITY FORCES HAS ALSO TAKEN PLACE.

5. BOTH EKAMBARAM AND GIDWANI WERE FAMILIAR WITH OFFER BY FAA LAST FISCAL YEAR TO CONSIDER APPLICATION OF FOREIGN STUDENT FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AIRPORT SECURITY COURSE. FOLLOWING BOMB INCIDENT IN NEW DELHI AIRPORT LAST JUNE, GOVERNMENT HAD MOVED TO MEET FINAL DATE. THEY WERE MOST EAGER TO PURSUE POSSIBILITY OF U.S. TRAINING. IN ORDER TO OBTAIN SUPPORT WITHIN GOI FOR FOREIGN EXCHANGE EXPENDITURE IN SUCH TRAINING PROGRAM, GIDWANI AND EKAMBARAM REQUESTED MORE INFORMATION AS TO SUBSTANCE OF SUBJECT MATTERS COVERED BY COURSE. GIDWANI SAID HE WAS PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN "TRAINING TRAINERS", THAT IS TO PROVIDE ADVANCE TRAINING

TO MORE QUALIFIED DGCA OFFICIALS WHO WOULD THEMSELVES ORGANIZE TRAINING PROGRAM IN INDIA. THEY WERE THINKING PERHAPS TWO PEOPLE A YEAR FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS.

6. IN THE MEANTIME, GIDWANI HOPED THAT USG HAD PRINTED MATTER ON AIRPORT SECURITY WHICH WE COULD PROVIDE HIM. HE WELCOMED U.S. LAWS, DIRECTIVES TO CIVIL AIRPORTS, ADVICE ON SCREENING TECHNIQUES, INFORMATION ON METAL DETECTORS, ETC. HIS BASIC PREMISE WAS "ANYTHING YOU HAVE WILL BE HELPFUL". HE EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO TREAT APPROPRIATE MATERIAL IN CONFIDENTIAL MANNER.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: WE WOULD APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S ATTENTION TO GOI OFFICIALS REQUEST FOR (A) POSSIBLE ATTENDANCE AT AIRPORT SECURITY TRAINING COURSES AND INFORMATION ON THE NATURE OF THAT COURSE AND (B) PROVISION OF AIR SECURITY MATERIAL ALREADY AVAILABLE WITHIN USG. OBVIOUSLY ALL OF INDIAN GOVERNMENT IS ALERT OT AIR SECURITY ISSUE AT THIS TIME AND WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP THEM UPGRADE SECURITY PROCEDURES AS WELL AS BE RESPONSIVE TO THEIR INTEREST IN COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED STATES ON TECHNICAL LEVEL.  
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